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THE MANY-SIDEDNESS OF MORAL EDUCATION.*

SOPHIE BRYANT.

MORAL education may be conceived in different ways according to the psychological process in relation to which we regard it; and, as a matter of fact, most types of psychological process are involved in it. It has to do with our thoughts and feelings, our impulses, our habits and our will, and with these in manifold composition. It has to do with our *tout ensemble*, with the way we regulate and express ourselves and react on our environment as a whole. It has to do with the making and training of our personality; and it has to recognize the fact that this personality has its own energies of growth which may withstand educational influence. Nevertheless, education claims control at all points,—demanding that every reaction, not merely in its effect, but as a whole, shall be what it calls *right* in the subjective sense. It claims, too, to bring us up so that we shall react *rightly* in the objective sense on all occasions. The former undertaking it calls the training of character.

Let us begin by considering moral education as the training of character in the general sense well understood by all whose experience of human beings is wide. We speak of a man as lacking in character when his motives are vague, wavering and indeterminate, when he is feeble in purpose and so incalculable as to action that

* The Annual Address to the Moral Education League in London.

you can never be certain as to the line he will take. One of the special moral problems is the training of such an individual to be a person of *determinate character* on which one can count, with a steady *system of life purposes*, exhibiting organic unity and implying a *life-ideal*, to the realization of which particular impulses and desires are subordinate. Such a person is pointed out with satisfaction as 'a man of character.' A great deal of education in homes and in schools is directed to the attainment of this apparently formal end, the turning out of men and women,—but especially men,—of character—strong, self-united, determined and determinate individuals.

Such persons are determinate because they become intelligible to us in so far as we have discovered the life-ideal which is the key to their system of purpose. They may be exceedingly unintelligible when we try to interpret them by a life-ideal which is not theirs. If egoists and altruists,—classifying men crudely,—were perfectly frank, they would find it much easier to understand each other. But each is apt to clothe himself more or less in conventions expressing the spirit of the other, so that between wolf-clad sheep and sheep-clad wolves our social perceptions are much confused. Even the men of determinate character do not understand one another.

It is obvious that a man who is not a good man may be a man of character. Conquerors, whether in war or politics, in trade or finance may be ruthless, cruel, bad. Milton, according to his lights, made a study of the type. I prefer to point to that great literary creation the Miltonic Satan, rather than to historic examples to whom I might wrongly impute the same titanic egoism. The real men of character who were monuments of selfishness in history probably had weak spots in their armor through which kindly human nature found a vent. The very bad are the brutally selfish who fail in character at some point, whose strength, when they are strong, is marred by some wildness or weakness or twist of incon-

sistency. The worst have minds like a tropical jungle, a tangle of impulse, imagination and desire, in the midst of the exuberant riotousness of which the human soul, with all its marvellous capacity for rational humane development, lies prostrate, darkened, hard to rouse. A child or a savage may be of this type, and under good conditions, if taken in time, may find his way to light and, in the end, grow up straight, pointing sunwards as all true human nature points. And all the while his plight may never have been discovered. Some are found by education and rescued,—perhaps unwittingly. Some require special personal efforts long sustained.

Experience of such cases makes one feel that there is nothing more essential in moral growth than development of character in the general sense. This, I think, is true; but the truth may be applied in such a way as to prove a serious practical fallacy. Everything depends on the way of life adopted, the life-ideal maintained as the mainspring of character. A parent, or schoolmaster, in love with the idea of character *per se* as the foundation on which to build, may think he is doing very well by stimulating 'prudential self love' for all it is worth and getting the self-regarding motives to combine into a permanent purpose of 'getting on in the world.' So we get the man of character indeed,—we get him as the egoist. It may be the perfect egoist,—Meredith's Sir Willoughby Patterne. With coarser material there emerges Bill Sykes. With commonplace human stuff,—the boy in the street,—there is a chance that his native human kindness, bubbling up within him, may save him in part from his educational fate. He goes out into life indeed with the idea of duty to self as "a light unto his eyes and a lamp unto his feet." But for all that he has grown up a human boy among his fellows and is probably a great deal more unselfish, more public spirited, and more kindly than he at all intends to be. Especially if he be a poor boy. The rich, in their luxury, security,

and withdrawal from the common life, are in much greater moral danger.

My point is that development of character in the abstract degenerates all too easily into its growth under the form of determined self-regard. The moral for us is two-fold: (1) We should from the first in our training of character make for the development of altruistic motives, social purposes, and a full composite ideal of life and personality. The training of character must be a training to righteous character all the time. (2) We have a new educational problem opened up before us. What education is required for persons growing up, or grown up in spite of us, on these very natural egoistic lines. This is the problem which the human race, at divers times and in divers ways, has had to solve. It is the subject of a fine old story which has been much misunderstood. How was Jacob the egoist, strong in character, trained by life within and without, to become the devoted, as well as successful, tribal chief?

We are surrounded by character developed to excess on egoistic lines. In most cases it tends to develop a good deal on those lines. We do not, in fact, call a person egoistic unless he is egoistic in excess. Indeed we are all egoists, slightly at any rate, in excess. Schemes for moral education,—both training and instruction,—should therefore on one of their sides make appeal to the individual's desire for his own good in some sense that he understands: it need not be the sense of ease and pleasure. If, indeed, we could catch all the children early and were ourselves omnipresent and infinitely wise, we might train them for the most part into such self-devoted membership of the human community as to realize the great social ideal which is common to modern scientific ethics and to the Pauline exposition of the Christian way of life. I am sure we have to go on doing this as much as we can. It is our main business to which we return again and again.

At the same time we must recognize the primordial

existence, the obvious naturalness of the crude self-centered way of life. Man is social and sympathetic. He is also solitary, self-contained, needing, indeed, continued spells of isolated self-communing for the development of those reflective powers which make him what he is, capable of understanding and acting in the sense of that natural system of which he is a part.

Now man the individual, no less than,—though not to us so obviously as,—man the social member, needs the moral life. He calls it righteousness, cleanness of heart, purity, *i. e.*, singleness of purpose. This is the language of Hebraic thought leading on to the root-idea of practical religion, the identification of the individual will with the purpose that rules the universe. The next step is the identification of that purpose with the winning to righteousness of the human race; and these two constitute the characteristic idea on which Christian ethical thought turns. In other words, the method of ethical education in religion is from the individual athirst for personal righteousness to the idea of coöperation in the purposes of God, and thence to the realization of that idea in the practical self-devotion of the individual to the service of the human community.

We might describe all this in secularist terms as the quest for personal perfection,—for a sound rich nature entirely at unity with itself, all its chords of impulse, feeling, thought, in harmony, all its life-functions co-operative to noble ends. After all, this is much what Plato said and no doubt Socrates also in the youth of the world. Aristotle, in his own way, which has its peculiar effectiveness for certain minds, teaches a similar lesson. Every man pursues his own good, and the intelligent man pursues it wisely, with careful inquiry into its nature and the way of pursuit. He calls it happiness, but he finds it to consist in the excellent life of the soul according to that reason which is the characteristic of man as Man. Hence it follows that the excellent life consists in the subordination of every kind of activity to that right

mean of sufficient, and not excessive, abundance which reason requires.

Thus Greek thought begins with the individual and makes reason the centre of his virtue. Wisdom stands forth as the ruling virtue, temperance and courage as its necessary allies in the governance of the whole. Within this scheme all the little virtues fall into their place. No man can be virtuous in the full sense, therefore, unless he be wise; and this is not given to all. The others, however, can be virtuous in a secondary sense through obedience to the wise.

So far, virtue (except for this dependence on the wise man) is individualistic. For that very reason this line of thought has a peculiar value at the individualistic stage of life: and to some natures at any stage it gives the most effective lead. It starts from the ideal of the individual seeking his own good; and goes on to interest him in the fascinating business of building up his own character, in learning to be brave and temperate and generous by doing brave and temperate and generous acts till by practice they become a joy and the product of natural impulse, by which sign we know that the character is formed. Just so, as Aristotle reminds us, a harper becomes a good or a bad harper by playing well or ill upon the harp. I remember having once taken great delight in this way of seeing the matter. I am sure it helps.

The ideal of character as the end of moral education may be worked to good effect on these lines of inquiry into the nature of the individual personal good, and hence of personal virtue. It is important in every case that this inquiry should be made, as otherwise ideas about the social good may be vague, confusing or even erroneous. It is well to be sure that for others as for self 'the goods of the soul' shall be valued at their worth.

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to himself: the gusty altruism of his egoistic days becomes a steady breeze, and, as it grows in strength, he perceives further that this community with his fellows which is his means of personal growth is their means of personal growth likewise. Thus a sense of mutual moral responsibility develops in the group. In so far as each has realized for himself a sound ideal of personal good, he will desire to forward its realization in the others. In so far as *anyone* has definitely reflected on his personal need for serviceable social life, his thoughts will pass beyond the limits of his immediate surroundings, and the ideal of social service as the object of personal life will be borne in upon him. One in a group who reaches this stage becomes a leader to the others. The most effective moral education is thus achieved. I remember very well when I discovered some of these things. I cannot even state them half as effectively now as I could then.

My contention so far is that in any system of moral education, considered as a "net spread abroad with cords" to catch minds of all sorts and different previous education, room should be left for the treatment of ethics in transition from the standpoint of personal good, conceived as righteousness, virtue, or heroic dignity,—the terms are interchangeable—to that of social service for the realization of such good in all. This in any case is the ideal of the end to be reached. All will not equally need to begin at the egoistic beginning, but I suggest that the opportunity of doing so should be made available for all. Egoism is a mighty force. It cannot be wise to disregard it in our practical logic.

In the above analysis it has appeared that human thought,—the human spirit rather, to use a wider word,—has reached this point by two very different roads. I have called them Hebraic and Greek, respectively, thus commemorating their most familiar starting points, and suggesting the two delightful literatures corresponding. The contrast between them, however, goes deeper than any racial distinction. It divides human beings in every

land, as no doubt it divides us in this room. Many of us there are moreover to whom the one way is as familiar, or as delightful, or as convincing as the other: the *way of religion*, from the single soul desiring righteousness to the idea of that righteousness as identification with the Universal Will and personal coöperation with it for the realization of the righteous human community: the *way of reason* (or scientific analysis), by natural development from simple egoism to the pursuit of good, seen at last to consist in the virtue of human personality finding its necessary complement in labor for the good, (in the same sense), of the social community. Scientific ethics leaves the matter there. Any sequel there may be is generally classified under philosophy. I could pursue the matter further so as to develop a certain latent parallelism between the ways: but this is not the place or time. I will content myself rather with a simple statement of the idea which lies, as I believe, at the back of the plain man's ethical faith and constitutes the pragmatic philosophy which supports him.¹

¹ S. Bryant, "Educational Ends," pp. 115, 116: He may see in it (*i. e.*, the world), a necessity alien to his will, to which he must conform; or he may see it in a partial realization of the purpose which he seeks to realize completely. Nature may seem to him as an enemy to be conquered, or as an ally who has done his work without his conscious guidance so far and is ready now to be guided by him, guiding him also, towards his end. In the latter case he sees himself as sovereign come into an inheritance of natural purpose, which he makes his own by understanding natural law, thus absorbing nature's guidance of him into his sovereignty over her. Society, too, may seem to him an evil thing which he must revolutionize, or a good partially accomplished which it is his purpose to carry out towards its end. . . . And by the same spirit of faith he may look upon his own character, not as a bad thing to be despised, but as a good thing to be made better—as an incomplete realization, but still a realization, of his personal end.

In this way, the impulse of freedom may assert its sovereignty over the past and the present, by asserting the partial realization of its essential purpose in both. This assertion, it is evident, carries us once more beyond the moral into the religious consciousness. We find ourselves asserting that the present has been fashioned as we would have it fashioned, if indeed we could quite clearly understand our own purpose.

My business here is strictly practical. I suggest that of these two ways neither can be with wisdom neglected. I have trodden both and each has taught me to understand the other better. To each of us as teachers it is essential that we should teach only what we believe and understand,—and not all of that, inasmuch as we should not take our learners out of their depth until they can swim. But as regards the learners I am sure of this: some learners more easily find their way to human fellowship by the short cut of ethical practice and reflection. Some, on the other hand, take no early interest in this, but before we have had them under our influence at all are off on the upper road through the universal purpose, where, without guidance, they may easily lose their way. For myself as teacher I offer both roads and think both best. Especially I would urge that the way of religion which obtains in our schools should be supplemented by such direct social teaching as is necessary to make its application clear. Likewise if our schools were universally secularized, I would urge the necessity of supplementing the ethical teaching in them by effective teaching elsewhere of religion as practical,—a way of life.

In either of these ways, or in both, or in some other, it is, I think, necessary for stable continuity of moral being that a doctrine or idea of moral relationships and personal virtue should be developed in young minds. This, however, is far from being the whole of that many-

We are driven to this assertion by the claim to sovereignty which we find implicit in our moral consciousness; and such an assertion implies the idea that the world is fashioned by a purpose relative to our moral purposes, and towards the further realization of which they are directed.

Of this religious idea, implied in moral ideas, there are many caricatures, arising from the tendency of the intellect to consider one part of an idea at a time. Thus there is the idea that the world has been so fashioned without any reference to man as further freely fashioning it; whence it is inferred that man is presumptuous when he doubts that it is in its present state a perfect realization of divine wisdom and goodness, and still more presumptuous when he dreams of improving it. In truth his faith in its goodness is relative to his conviction that it is his business to improve it.

sided activity, moral education. It is not, as you know, even the whole of moral instruction.

Moral education is concerned with the whole of the complex process by which persons grow from worse to better and with the external conditions favorable to that growth. As we have seen, there are two main dangers: (1) There is the danger to which some are, from the outset, condemned, by a self-contradictory or an unstable heredity. These we call weak, or passionate, or easily led, or moody, unreliable, lacking character. These are the Esaus of all times and all races, lacking unity of nature, persistence of purpose. Their contrast—the Jacob of Biblical story—has been my text so far. This was quite without intention,—I did not discover the fact until I had finished the description.

(2) The second danger is universal: it is implied in that very intensity of self-consciousness which places man at the head of beings on this earth; it makes him capable of understanding as a whole both his own welfare and the welfare of mankind, between which two when they conflict he can choose at any point of his life career. The danger is that he will always, or generally, choose the course which, for the moment, appears to his limited vision as best for himself. We have considered that danger, and inferred from its omnipresence the moral necessity of counteracting its influence by the further development of that which is its source, the personal intelligence which, having found the egoistic good as practical object, must go on to find the social or some other cosmic end implied in it. "No man liveth for himself," though most men try. The saddest spectacle in the world is the culmination of that attempt in the unspeakable dreariness of a selfish old age. But youth lacks imagination to fear the solitude of age.

Moral education is above all things an undertaking to provide occasion for unselfish deeds, for the uprush of sympathy and its practical expression, and in general for the development of considerateness toward others as

an abiding habit of mind. To be touched by the feeling of another, when we imagine it, is not enough: the affections of our own being become our feelings only when we attend to them, *i. e.*, when we bring our self-conscious minds to bear upon them. So also when we have a habit of attending on due occasion to others, of bringing our minds to bear upon them, then we are indeed in touch and disposed to deal with their good as with our own. The beautiful sympathetic characters, who seem to radiate wise kindness at every pore, are so either by rare natural grace or by the good fortune of an education rich in opportunities, — perhaps also in examples, — developing this simple habit of considerateness for others. The high talent of sympathetic intuition grows thus from the tiniest seed. Consideration for the baby who must not be waked by careless noise, for the busy literary father who should not be disturbed, for the invalid mother to be saved in every way,—little early lessons like these are wonderfully efficacious. Too seldom, alas! does the early mountaineer in the Swiss hotel come quietly down stairs at 2 A. M., nailed boots in hand, careful not to wake the sleepers. Too often, alas! are the children in well-to-do households considered beyond reason, and never expected to consider others in making their plans. Incidentally, even in childhood, the result is boredom to themselves.

The family is, I believe, the best of all schools, for the drawing out of this fundamental social instinct, and for its incorporation in the sense of duty, or obligation to others, which emerges *pari passu* with the family requirement for willing service. The claims made by the family on the child, to light the fire, to mind the baby, to fetch water from the well, to drive the cows to grass,—the poor child is better off than the rich in these moral opportunities,—all these little claims train him in the way of ordering his life within the limits they prescribe. Outside these he is his own man and does what he desires. Inside these he does what he must. But in a good home circle, where mutual respect and affection obtains, the

'must' of slavish obligation easily becomes 'ought'; and, with the growing realization of the family welfare as a main object of personal pursuit, 'ought' is absorbed into the free will as one of the strongest elements in it.

The more vigorous natures progress more rapidly to this absorption of 'must' in 'ought' and 'ought' in 'will.' The child of strong personal initiative claims all his activity for his own free will. Here and there he finds himself fettered by compulsions. It is not, however, the doings to be done that he minds: it is the being made to do them. If he rebels, as he may, there is perhaps more compulsion and things are worse than before. Or, perhaps it is not compulsion, but some other treatment which makes him ashamed of himself. Or, perhaps it is only friction and the spoiling of fun and affection. In one way or another he is dissatisfied with rebellion as a remedy. Or, if he be a thoughtful boy, he will consider the position before he rebels; he will probably conclude that the claims are in part, at any rate, reasonable, also that he does not mind taking them as part of the day's work, also that it is perhaps a shame to worry his parents,— 'mean,' in fact. Anyhow he *will* do what is wanted, and do it quickly before he is told. After all, what he wants is *not to be ordered about*; that can be escaped by a little easy thought to find out what will be wanted in order to do it first. Hence emerges the remarkably good child who will not, however, stand 'telling.' If left alone,—not worried too much at least,—or better still, appreciated without spoiling,—the self-discipline involved in the maintenance of this thought-won freedom, does the rest: the social nature develops, and meekness with it; the breach between self-will and other-will is healed by the identification of desire with duty.

School has advantages over the family in dealing with strong-willed natures whether thoughtful or not,—with rebels incipient or otherwise. Government in the family is naturally patriarchal; it may easily seem to the child,—and it sometimes is,—arbitrary and uncertain. Deeds

are allowed at one time and forbidden at another. The association of parent and child is, indeed, so intimate and continual that it is not easy for the ordinary parent to be quite consistent. He,—or she,—stops a thing when it is a worry, and allows it when it is too much trouble to interfere. This is what the high-spirited child,—too egoistic as yet to be patient with grown-up moods,—this is what he hates. He does not know,—he cannot find out,—the rules of the game of life; and he is estranged by the recurrent shock of unexpected interferences.

He goes to school and finds himself one of many, all expected to behave,—and for the most part behaving,—according to a law and tradition, written or unwritten, the details of which are promulgated clearly and the principles of which are even discussed with explanation from time to time. The great thing for the self-willed child is that he knows, or can know, what they are. He lives, therefore, under a constitution and knows that he is free,—*i. e.*, that he will not be stopped,—so long as he observes the rules of life laid down by that constitution. *If he accepts this status in his mind*, he is a free boy well content. Under a well-administered and reasonable constitution the rebel disappears. The arbitrary school-master, on the other hand, who decides what shall be done out of his own head from day to day, rules with difficulty and moral loss over an unwilling, if not insurgent, community.

School masters of this kind are no doubt out of date. The characteristic fallacy to which school systems tend to-day is not excess of personal government, nor excess in rules of conduct, nor over-strictness. Quite the contrary. Our fallacy to-day is the over-development of the school life, in games and work and communal undertakings, so that all the individual's voluntary activity tends to be absorbed into it. No room is left, or not sufficient room, for personal initiative in the rank and file. The social habit waxes strong within the sphere of action as-

signed to it, in school and home and social circle. There is public spirit in that limited sense and altruistic feeling. But where is the opportunity we all need for that *first essential of the moral life, the self-training of character to independent initiative and sturdy adhesion to purposes freely chosen?* The schoolboy's conformity to the prevalent type, his identification of his personal choice with the common will, his dedication of time, interest, and thought to the common pursuits, his development of the social, at the expense of the personal, initiative in himself,—the excess of all this tends in the long run to the impoverishment of social nature and personal nature alike. In the mind of the man who is not mere conformist, but holds fast to his freedom, the reach of social purpose is wider than it can be when the range of duty is conceived under the limited forms given it by the common-sense of any particular community. It is the *individual* who by his own initiative of thought and will,—not otherwise,—transcends the familiar limits of the particular public spirit in which he has been bred, to find his chief good in a wider sphere, the community of all intelligent beings. It is the maintenance of the free man's personality in its freedom that, under social motives working in him, makes possible this intimate apprehension of the universal good as his. Nor is this all.

In truth morality implies no tendency to the absorption of my personal ideas in the idea common to all. It implies the contrary. Those common ideas originated in persons and are propagated by persons in other persons. If any man lay down his personality as an originator of ideas he thereby ceases to contribute to the growth of the common stock: so far he ceases to serve others as well as to be his separate self. It is by the free growth of ideas in separate persons that humanity creates the great ideas in the service of which men gain freedom. The personal development of ideas is, therefore, no less the service due to all than it is the personal right of each. As man is the self-conscious organ of nature, so persons discharge that function of humanity by the free use of personal reason and personal will. *To each man his personality is a gift in the use of which he fulfils his mission to humanity.* Such mission is at once his right and his duty.²

² S. Bryant, "Educational Ends," p. 126.

This was to have been an address on the many-sidedness of moral education. I have used nearly all my time in discussing three elements in that composite transformation which the human race, here and there, does imperfectly achieve, (1) the transformation of wayward impulse into a steady purpose; (2) the evolution of altruism side by side with egoism in wholesome social life; (3) the training to dutifulness, conscience, and voluntary submission, within limits, to the social will; and the maintenance, over against all this and yet blending with it, of the strong man's claim so to use circumstance and so adjust himself that he may in all that he does be conscious of himself as doing it freely.

I have spoken, too, on that ancient and inexhaustible topic, the conversion of the mind set on the realization of its own good from egoistic to universal purpose; and we marked the large part played in this conversion by the unifying impulse of Reason,—the human characteristic which insists that the purpose of an intelligent being must be at one with itself and with the purposes of all equally developed intelligences. We noted also the part played by religion and pragmatic philosophy, respectively, in holding up as it were the hands of human nature, by faith in the real fulfillment of the moral end. It is clear, too, that in relation to the whole of this topic, education must in the main be indebted to instruction for its progress.

One other side of the process has been mentioned, but not with sufficient clearness set out by itself. Character, conscience, reason, sympathy, personality, the need of educational opportunity for these we see. But deeper, simpler, and more potent than any other motive is the soul's direct impulse toward self-devotion by means of which life can put itself forth to reach new and enlarged self-consciousness. There is nothing more natural to human nature than this impulse, and few things so valuable. The most insignificant life is glorified and literally enlarged by it, the dullest life enlightened. Happily, too,

it needs no direct positive education. It quickens as life quickens, it brings itself up, it pours itself out: the educator, attentive to guidance and encouragement in his business otherwise, does all that need be done for self-devotion by expecting it to show itself along the lines of his work, and for the rest by being careful to see that even unwise manifestations are not lightly discouraged.

SOPHIE BRYANT.

LONDON.

COMPETITION, NATURAL AND INDUSTRIAL.

IRA WOODS HOWERTH.

THE fundamental and essential principle of the modern industrial order, that is, of Capitalism, is competition. Remove competition and the whole system would be demolished, or at least transformed. The competitive system, however, has the sanction and the sanctity of 'the established fact,' and of a long-continued existence. Hence any reform which would endanger it by disturbing its foundation principle is at once, and almost instinctively, discredited and opposed. Do the trusts suppress competition? Then, they must be 'smashed.' Will Socialism destroy competition? Down, then, with Socialism. This represents the attitude of perhaps a majority of the people, with whom competition is almost a sacred principle which it is next to sacrilege to question or criticise.

The classical economists from Adam Smith to the present time have taught that competition is indispensable to progress. They have assumed perfect mobility of capital and labor, and, on the part of competitors, a complete knowledge of the market. With this wholly theoretical assumption they have been easily able to show that competition exerts a necessary regulative action in industry, and they have consequently claimed for it the sanction of a natural (or divine) law.